

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER  
3RD DISTRICT, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION  
AND RELATED AGENCIES  
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U.S. JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1602

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750 ANDERSON STREET, SUITE B  
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(360) 695-6292

WWW.JHB.HOUSE.GOV

April 22, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I write in support of the City of Ridgefield's rural application for BUILD grant funding to fund the Pioneer Street Extension Project. The City is seeking \$5,812,000 to expand and extend Pioneer Street into the Ridgefield Junction. While no match is required under rural BUILD guidelines, the City of Ridgefield will provide \$1,700,000 (22%) in non-federal cost share to the total project cost of \$7,512,000.

Ridgefield sits on the northern edge of the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro Metropolitan Statistical area, approximately 22 miles north of downtown Portland, Oregon. Like many metro areas, rapid growth is bringing rise to increasing home prices—pushing residents into the outskirts. As a result, since 2014 the City of Ridgefield has seen 1,100 new homes built, with an estimated 2,500 set to be built by 2024. This activity has helped Ridgefield earn the designation as the fastest growing community in the State of Washington in 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2019. According to U.S. Census data, Ridgefield has grown 65 percent since 2010. This trend is augmented by large developments in the area, such as the recently completed Cowlitz Indian Tribe's \$510 million casino located approximately two miles to the north of the project site.

Unfortunately, Ridgefield's economic development capacity is limited by insufficient access to employment lands, preventing the city from growing an employment base for Ridgefield residents and the region. The Pioneer Street Extension Project will attract higher levels of private investment to underutilized land, provide access to Clark College's new campus and increase efficiency and safety of vehicle and truck freight. This \$7.5 million investment will significantly improve economic development capacity, unlocking 820 acres of underutilized employment land creating approximately 8,618 permanent jobs at full buildout.

The project will also address a significant safety issue in the Ridgefield Junction. Currently, the area's vehicle and freight traffic must use two roads that are not designed for high volume or freight traffic to access the underutilized Union Ridge business park. The existing roads are failing from the heavy truck traffic and their narrow width forces trucks to use a portion of the on-coming lane when navigating the corner between South 65<sup>th</sup> and South 5<sup>th</sup>, creating a dangerous environment for travelers. Linking the 65<sup>th</sup> roundabout and I-5 Junction, creating a major arterial road will significantly increase public safety while reducing the costs accrued from accidents around the I-5 Junction.

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Thank you for your consideration of this important request. I ask that you please keep me informed when you award the BUILD grant. Please direct the information to Rachel Katz at [Rachel.Katz@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rachel.Katz@mail.house.gov) or via telephone at (360) 695-6292.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jaime Herrera Beutler".

Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress